

Application No.: 09/277312

Case No.: 53836US002

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1-30. (canceled).

31. (new) A method of preparing a flexible solid intumescent fire barrier material, comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing, in a substantially volatile free state, a mixture consisting essentially of water-insoluble intumescent mineral granules, halogen-free organic binder initially in the form of latex binder which has been dried to remove any volatiles, and phosphorus containing flame retardant; and

- (b) mixing the mixture at high shear conditions using a twin screw extruder; wherein the resulting fire barrier material has a softness value from about 0.49 to about 1.45 mm and an expansion ratio at least 2.9 times greater than the same composition would have if processed under high shear conditions with volatiles present.